

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
*South Texas Veterans Health Care System*



## **New Patient Orientation Handbook**

South Texas Veterans Health Care System

**San Antonio**

**Kerrville**

2020 Edition

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# VHA Mission, Vision and Core Values (I CARE)

## **VHA Mission**

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## **VHA Vision**

VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient centered and evidence based.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery, and continuous improvement. It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the nation's well-being through education, research, and service in national emergencies.

## **VA Core Values (I CARE)**

The Core Values are the basic elements of how we go about our work—they define “who we are”—and form the underlying principles we will use every day in our service to Veterans:

**I**ntegrity

**C**ommitment

**A**dvocacy

**R**espect

**E**xcellence

# ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

## Disability Compensation Benefits

### What is VA disability compensation?

Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to a Veteran for disabilities caused or made worse by injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty, active duty training, or inactive duty training. Disability compensation is also paid to certain Veterans disabled from VA health care.

### Who is eligible?

You may be eligible for disability compensation if you have a service-related disability and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

### How much does VA pay?

The amount of basic benefit paid ranges from \$136.74 to \$2,973.86 per month (amount may change annually as determined by Congress), depending on how disabled you are. You may be paid additional amounts in certain instances, if

- You have very severe disabilities or loss of limb(s)
- You have a spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s)
- You have a seriously disabled spouse

### How can I apply?

**Apply online:** <https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates/>

## Related benefits

### **Note: Entitlement may depend on level of disability**

- Priority medical care
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Clothing allowance
- Grants for specially adapted housing
- Automobile grant and adaptive equipment
- Service-disabled Veterans insurance
- Federal employment preference
- State/local Veterans benefits
- Military exchange and commissary privileges

## For more information

Call VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000 or visit VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

**Audie L. Murphy Campus (ALMC): (210) 949 – 3981**

**Kerrville Campus (KC): (830) 792-2514.**

# Eligibility and Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to informing Veterans about VA health care benefits and services and publishes various publications to keep you up to date.

We encourage you to refer to these publications when you have questions about your eligibility for specific health care benefits. More help is available

- At your local VA health care facility's Enrollment Office
- Online at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits) and [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

- By calling toll-free 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET.



## **Veteran's Health Benefits Handbook**

When you enroll in the VA health care system, you will receive a personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook (VHBH). Your handbook will be tailored specifically to you, with a current, accurate description of your VA health care benefits and services. Safeguard it as you would any other sensitive personal document.

The VHBH includes

- Eligibility and health care benefits information
- Contact information for your local facility
- Information regarding copayment responsibilities
- Instructions on how to schedule appointments
- Guidelines for communicating treatment needs
- Patient rights information
- Guidance on how to obtain copies of medical records

Enrolled Veterans will receive a personalized handbook via U.S. mail; therefore, you are encouraged to ensure a current address is on file with VA. You may call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) to update your address or to request a new handbook.

## **Health Care Benefits Overview**

The Health Care Benefits Overview book provides information you need to understand VA's health care system, including answers to frequently asked questions about eligibility and benefits. The publication is available at VA medical centers and can also be downloaded from

[www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/epublications.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/epublications.asp).

# ACCESSING AND UTILIZING VA HEALTH CARE

## Co-Managed Care/Dual Care

We encourage you to receive all your medical care through the VA and have a single VA primary care provider and team who coordinate all aspects of your care. However, we are willing to work with your private health care providers to provide and coordinate your health care. We call this Co-managed Care or Dual Care. It means that your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) and private health care providers will work together to provide safe, appropriate, and ethical medical care.

### VA Policy

If you are seeking care, medications, or supplies from VA, you must enroll in VA health care and have a primary care provider who manages your care, even if some of your care is provided in the community.

Specialty services will be provided according to the local facility or Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) policy once you are enrolled in primary care.

# Emergency Care

## In VA Facilities

If your VA facility has an emergency department and you live nearby, you should go there for emergency care.

Kerrville Campus does not have emergency care.

## In non-VA Facilities

When it is not possible for you to go to a VA medical center, you should go to the nearest hospital that has an emergency department or to an urgent care center. If you are in an ambulance, the paramedics will usually take you to the closest emergency department.

## What is emergency care?

A medical emergency is when you have an injury or illness that is so severe that you could become gravely ill or even die without immediate treatment.

**Emergency Department (ED)** – A unit in a VA medical facility that provides more acute care needs such as resuscitative therapy and stabilization for life threatening situations. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Urgent Care Center (UCC)** – Provides acute medical care for patients in need of immediate attention for minor injuries. A UCC is generally not open 24/7 and does not typically accept ambulances.

## How do I know if what is wrong with me is an emergency?

Use your best judgment. If you think your injury or illness may be severe, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department or urgent care center in your area.

## Do I need to call the VA before I obtain emergency care?

No. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department or urgent care center. It is important to notify the VA within 72 hours of the ER visit or admission to the community hospital. This allows VA to assist in coordinating necessary care or transfer and ensures the administrative and clinical requirements for VA to pay for the care, are met.

## If the doctor wants to admit me to the hospital, must I obtain approval from the VA?

- If the admission **is an emergency—NO.**
- If the admission **is not an emergency—YES.** You, a friend, a family member, or someone from the non-VA hospital must call the closest VA medical center and speak to the patient transfer or patient administration representative. This must be done within 72 hours of your arrival at the emergency department or urgent care center. If a VA bed is available and if you can be safely transferred, you must be moved. If you refuse to be transferred, the VA will not pay for any further care.

## Does my other insurance (TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, etc.) change my VA coverage for emergency services?

Yes, it might. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain your options.



## **Will VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States?**

Yes, but this coverage is very different. VA will only pay for emergency care outside the United States if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. Contact the VA Health Administration Center at (877) 345-8179.

You can find more information on the Foreign Medical Program at [www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/fmp/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/fmp/index.asp)

## **Will VA pay for emergency care if I am in jail?**

No. Usually the jail is responsible for providing medical care.

## **How long do I have to file a claim for reimbursement for emergency medical care?**

Please file your claim with the nearest VA medical center quickly. If your regional office recently determined your benefits, you should submit a reimbursement claim as soon as you can. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain the time limits for filing claims.

## **Will I have to pay for a portion of my emergency care?**

You may have to pay for a portion of your emergency care, depending on the care you received. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain these factors and how they affect your obligation to pay for part of your care.

## If I am admitted to the hospital as a result of an emergency, what will VA pay?

This depends on your VA eligibility status and other factors. VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges after you are admitted. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain these factors and their impact on your situation.

## Where can I get more information?

You can get more answers to your questions on the Veterans Health Administration website:

[www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/emergency\\_care.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/emergency_care.asp). You may also contact a patient benefits counselor at your VA medical center for details about your situation.

**To notify the VA, please call Patient Administration Service at:  
(210) 949-3850 Monday thru Friday between 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.  
After hours, please call (210)617-5300 ext. 15162 or 15940.  
Kerrville VA: (830)896-2020 ext. 12121 or (830)792-2444.**

# How to Access VA Health Care

## VA Telephone Care

You can access VA care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use VA's telephone service to

- Schedule appointments for all clinical areas, including primary/ambulatory care, community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and specialty clinics

- Call the VA pharmacy to access the automated telephone refill services for medications or supplies
- Get advice about your health care concerns

## **During Business Hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)**

Contact your designated Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) for primary care, and/or your corresponding specialty clinic, to

- Make an appointment, change an appointment, or cancel an appointment. If you know you are going to miss an appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so that another Veteran can get an appointment.
- Get advice about your health concerns. You can work through your assigned Registered Nurse Care Manager as well as the other members of your PACT. This includes the extended team members from your clinic such as pharmacy, social work, mental health, etc.

Things to remember:

- If you are feeling sick, please call your PACT. The team will assess your medical needs and work with you to address them.
- Calling the primary care clinic will help us to make arrangements with your own primary care provider and extended team as much as possible.
- Please understand that if you "walk in" to a primary care clinic without a scheduled appointment, we will evaluate your condition, and you will then be seen according to the severity of your medical situation.

- Your primary care clinic may utilize a call center. If you are looking to directly reach a member of your PACT, you may not be able to speak with them immediately. In that case, you will receive a callback.

## **After Business Hours (Evenings, Nights, Weekends, Federal Holidays)**

There are two ways you can get the care you need after hours:

### **1) Call the after-hours telephone advice care line: 1-888-686-6350**

Use this service to

- Make an appointment, change an appointment, or cancel an appointment. If you know you are going to miss an appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so that another Veteran can get an appointment.
- Get advice about your health concerns.

The advice line is staffed by registered nurses who will discuss your medical concern and work with you to determine the care you need. The nurse will document the telephone call in your electronic medical record and notify the appropriate medical provider.

Some VA medical centers use an automated telephone call to remind patients of an upcoming clinic appointment. This helps reduce no-shows and improves access for all Veterans.

### **2) Use the online “secure messaging” function in MyHealthVet to inquire about non-emergency issues.**

You can send specific questions concerning your medication, upcoming appointments, day-to-day health plan, and more 24 hours a day. Your clinic will

respond to you online, or by phone if necessary, to provide the answers and service you need.

# How VA Health Care Works for You

## Choose a Facility

You can choose where you receive VA health care services, including primary care, specialty medicine, surgery services, mental health care, and other care services. Primary care is your gateway to VA health care.

### **Audie L. Murphy Memorial VA Hospital**

7400 Merton Minter Blvd.

San Antonio, Texas 78229

Phone: 210-617-5300; Toll free: 877-469-5300



### **Kerrville VA Hospital**

3600 Memorial Blvd.

Kerrville, Texas 78028

Phone: 830-896-2020; Toll free: 866-487-1653



## OUTPATIENT CLINICS

### **Frank M. Tejeda Outpatient Clinic**

5788 Eckhert Rd.

San Antonio, Texas 78240

Phone: 210-699-2100

### **South Bexar Outpatient Clinic**

4610 East Southcross Blvd. Suite 100

San Antonio, Texas 78222

Phone: 210-648-1491

**North Bexar Outpatient Clinic**

16019 Nacogdoches Road Suite 101  
San Antonio, Texas 78247  
Phone: 210-967-2800

**North Central Federal Health Clinic**

17440 Henderson Pass  
San Antonio, Texas 79232  
Phone: 210-483-2900

**Shavano Park Outpatient Clinic**

4350 Lockhill-Selma Road, Suite 200  
San Antonio, Texas 78249  
Phone: 210-949-3773

**Balcones Heights Outpatient Clinics**

4522 Fredericksburg Road  
Gold-Suite A-10; Silver-Suite A-88  
San Antonio, Texas 78201  
Phone: 210-732-1802

**Victoria Outpatient Clinic**

1908 N Laurent Street, Suite 150  
Victoria, Texas 77901  
Phone: 361-582-7700

## Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)

### **Beeville CBOC**

302 South Hillside Dr.  
Beeville, Texas 78102  
Phone: 361-358-9912

### **NE 410 San Antonio CBOC**

2391 NE Loop 410 Suite 101  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Phone: 210 590-0247

### **NW 410 San Antonio CBOC**

4318 Woodcock Suite 120  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  
Phone: 210-736-4051

### **New Braunfels CBOC**

705 Landa Street, Suite C  
New Braunfels, Texas 78130  
Phone: 830-643-0717

### **Pecan Valley CBOC**

4243 E. Southcross, Suite 204  
San Antonio, Texas 78222  
Phone: 210-337-4316

**SW Military CBOC**

1714 SW Military Dr. Suite 101

San Antonio, Texas 78221

Phone: 210-923-0777

**Sequin CBOC**

526 E. Court Street

Sequin, Texas 78155

Phone: 830-372-1697

Please choose the facility that is most convenient for you. This is called your “preferred facility.” Once you choose a facility, VA staff will provide you with more information and help you schedule your first appointment.

**Get Assigned to a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)**

You receive your primary care in VA through what is known as a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). Your PACT can take care of most of your health care needs or refer you for specialty care as needed.

You will be assigned a primary care provider—a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant—who is part of a PACT “teamlet.” This teamlet includes a registered nurse who serves as Care Manager, a clinical associate (licensed practical nurse or medical assistant), and an administrative associate. All women Veterans receiving primary care must be offered assignment to a Women’s Health provider and Patient Aligned Care Team (WH-PACT). Women’s Health PACTs have team members who have received training and/or are experienced in the care of women Veterans.



# Veterans Choice Program (VCP) and Community Care

<https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/index.asp>



## Questions regarding:

- Bills for Dental care or out-of-network ER visit or inpatient admission: 1-877-881-7618.
- Community Care referral thru TriWest, scheduling or rescheduling, and billing: TRIWEST-PC3: 1-855-722-2838.
- VA co-pays or bills to your other health insurance: 1-866-393-9132 or (210) 616-8502.
- General questions and or coordination of your community referrals: Your Local Community Care Office: (210) 949-3850.
- Prescriptions from a Community provider, please call: 1-800-983-0933.
  - Prescriptions from your community provider can be filled thru e-prescribing to SAN Antonio VAMC Pharmacy or by faxing the prescription to the South Texas VAMC Pharmacy Fax #: (210) 949-3595.

## Suggested Video:

Veteran Community Care: Filing Claims ( 4 min 37 secs)

[https://youtu.be/W\\_t3QIKkAeY](https://youtu.be/W_t3QIKkAeY)



# VA Mission Act

<https://www.missionact.va.gov/>

## VA HEALTH CARE SERVICES

### Crisis Prevention and Management

Many situations can trigger an emotional or mental health crisis—from troubles in personal relationships to the loss of a job. For Veterans, experiences from military service can make these crises worse.

When emotional issues reach a crisis point, help is available. You can contact behavioral health providers at your local VA by calling **210-949-3397** or simply visiting your local Emergency Department. Also know that any time you need support, the Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7/365 with trained responders who are there for you. Call **1-800-273-8255** and **press 1**.

**Sometimes a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. Learn to recognize these warning signs:**

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live

- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

## Get help *immediately* if you are:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Acting self-destructively, including using drugs, driving recklessly, carrying a weapon, etc.

If you are a Veteran in crisis, or know a Veteran showing any of the above warning signs, you can get free, confidential support from an experienced, caring VA responder 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year:

- Call **1-800-273-8255** and **press 1**
- Visit the Veterans Crisis Line website at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) and click on the **Confidential Veterans Chat** button
- Send a text message to **838255**

## Resources

### VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

- Each VA Medical Center has a suicide prevention coordinator to ensure Veterans receive needed counseling and services
- Resource locator - [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

### Mental Health

- VHA provides specialty inpatient and outpatient mental health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. All mental health care provided by VHA supports recovery,

striving to enable a person with mental health problems to live a meaningful life in the community and achieve his or her full potential.

- For more information on VA Mental Health Services visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

### **Make the Connection**

- MakeTheConnection.net is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information about physical and mental health symptoms, challenging life events, and mental health conditions. They can also learn about available resources and support.
- Visit [www.MakeTheConnection.net](http://www.MakeTheConnection.net) to learn more.

## **Healthy Living**

In VA, we are committed to helping you stay well and well-informed. Check out these nine Healthy Living Messages for information you can use to stay healthy, be empowered and equipped to take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest. To learn more, talk with your VA health care team, check out the Healthy Living Messages linked below, or visit [www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov). We'll be happy to help you.

## **Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**

The National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) is a field based VHA national program office that helps Veterans stay well and well-informed. NCP applies VA's [whole health approach](#) through health education, health promotion and disease prevention.

NCP has five main program areas:

## Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP)

Veterans receive clinical preventive services from their primary care providers.

These services include immunizations to prevent disease, screening tests to detect disease at an early stage, and behavioral counseling to avoid or reduce risk factors for disease.

Go to [www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov) for more information.

HPDP gives you information and tools to help you stay healthy, featuring nine **Healthy Living Messages** that can help you live a healthy life.

If you have been thinking about making a healthy lifestyle change, HPDP's **Gateway to Healthy Living** can help. Gateway offers a 90-minute group session and two follow-up phone calls to help you identify and reach your goal for making a healthy lifestyle change.

HPDP's **Telephone Lifestyle Coaching**, or TLC, offers individualized health coaching over the telephone with a live coach. You can even schedule calls outside of normal clinic hours. Coaches can help you with:

- Eating wisely
- Limiting alcohol
- Being tobacco free
- Being physically active
- Managing stress
- Managing weight

## MOVE!® Weight Management Program for Veterans

The MOVE! Program has helped close to 800,000 Veterans better manage their weight and reduce their risk of chronic disease.

There are several ways you can participate in MOVE!. Check with your local MOVE! Coordinator about what options are available for you

- **MOVE! Group Sessions or MOVE! Individual Sessions**—available at every VA facility to Veterans receiving care, these sessions are led by a local MOVE! clinician; videoconferencing options are also available
- **MOVE! Telephone Lifestyle Coaching**—for Veterans who prefer one-on-one contact via telephone with their own weight management coach
- **TeleMOVE!**—includes daily in-home messaging for Veterans who may benefit from frequent reminders to stay on track
- **MOVE! Coach**—a mobile app for Veterans who prefer to manage their weight on their own

## Veteran’s Health Education and Information (VHEI)

VHEI supports Veteran-centered health education programs, services, and resources for Veterans, family members, and caregivers across VHA facilities. This helps your care team work with you and share the latest health information.

To help you manage your own health care, VHEI oversees the popular [Veterans Health Library](#). The Library is an “anytime, everywhere” online resource of health information, helping you make healthy lifestyle choices and learn about your conditions and their treatment. It is available 24/7 via computer, tablet, or mobile device.

Suggested Video: Veterans Health Library Web Tour (6 min 24 secs)



[www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov)

## Clinical Preventive Services (CPS)

How does your VHA health care team get up-to-date guidance about things to protect you against disease? One way is through NCP’s Clinical Preventive Services. The CPS team develops recommendations for screening tests,

immunizations, health behavior counseling, and preventive medicines and tools, helping your care team deliver these services to you. This includes offering you things like the right vaccines and screening tests at the right time!

## **Infection: Don't Pass It On (IDPIO) Campaign**

The IDPIO Campaign leads VHA's education and communication efforts to teach Veterans and VHA employees the best ways to keep from catching and spreading infections and diseases, including seasonal flu.

### **References**

NCP Internet page: [www.prevention.va.gov/](http://www.prevention.va.gov/)

MOVE! Internet page: [www.move.va.gov/](http://www.move.va.gov/)

# **VA Health Care Services**

VA places a high priority on giving you excellent health care. VA provides a full spectrum of health care services, including health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, therapy, rehabilitation, and palliative care.

VA health care has adopted a [whole health approach](#), a radical redesign of health care that empowers and equips you to take charge of your health and well-being. Guided by a personalized health plan, VA's [Whole Health System](#) considers the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental elements that work together to provide the best quality of life for you.

VA's goal is to provide eligible Veterans with the care they need at the right time, at the right place, from the right provider. This may be on-site during inpatient hospitalization, at one of the primary or specialty care clinics, at a community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC), in a community living center, or in a residential care facility. However, not all services are provided at every site where VA health

care is provided. Sometimes, you may need to travel to another VA facility or receive care from a local community care provider, paid for by VA. Telehealth is another option for some appointments. If any of these are necessary for you, your VA provider will work with you to obtain these services.

## **Inpatient Care Services**

Inpatient care provided by the VA includes a full range of treatment services that include (but are not limited to)

### **Audie L. Murphy Campus (ALMC)**

- Acute care inpatient unit
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Psychiatric
- Dialysis acute treatment
- Intensive care units
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Psychiatric
  - Cardiac specialty
- Community living centers
- Residential mental health rehabilitation units
- Domiciliaries
- Spinal cord injury units
- Polytrauma centers rehabilitation centers & network sites

### **Kerrville Campus (KC)**

- A four-unit, Community Living Center (CLC)
- Pharmacy
- Dental
- Audiology



- Mental Health
- Laboratory
- Imaging
- Podiatry
- Social Work
- Food and Nutrition
- Optometry/Ophthalmology
- Geriatric and Extended Care
- Respiratory Therapy
- Dermatology
- Gastroenterology
- Orthopedics
- Urology
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services

## Primary Care (PACT)

VHA primary care gives eligible Veterans easy access to health care professionals familiar with their needs. It provides long-term patient-provider relationships, coordinates care across VA health services, educates patients, and offers disease prevention programs.

As a patient in VHA, your primary care is focused on you. We deliver your care in teams, called Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACTs). You are the center of your PACT, which also includes family members, caregivers, and VA health care professionals. This team-based method helps us give you effective, efficient, comprehensive care. It also helps us communicate about and coordinate your care with you and across all parts of the VA health care system.

## Outpatient Services

VA also provides numerous outpatient services to help diagnose and/or treat Veterans' medical conditions, usually as a consultation from a primary care provider. These providers specialize in an area of care and have extensive training and education.

VA outpatient services include:

Service:	ALMC	KC
Anesthesiology	X	
Audiology (hearing)	X	X
Bariatric (weight-loss surgery)	X	
Cardiology – Vascular (heart and blood circulation)	X	
Dental	X	X
Dermatology	X	X
Diabetes and Endocrinology	X	
Diagnostic Laboratory (tests)	X	X
ENT (EAR, Nose and Throat)	X	
Eye Care (Optometry and Ophthalmology)	X	X
Gastroenterology (GI)	X	X
Geriatric Care	X	X
Gynecology Surgery (Women's Reproductive Surgery)	X	
Homebase Primary Care	X	X
Infectious Disease	X	
Mental Health	X	X
Nephrology (kidneys)	X	
Neurology (nerves)		

Service	ALMC	KC
Neurosurgery (brain, spinal cord,	X	

and nerve surgery)		
Nuclear Medicine (imaging)	X	
Nutrition and Food Service	X	X
Occupational Therapy	X	
Orthopedics	X	X
Orthotic and Prosthetic Services (artificial limbs, orthotic devices)	X	
Oncology (cancer)	X	
Pacemaker (heart)	X	
Pain Management	X	
Pharmacy (medication)	X	X
Physical Therapy/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	X	X
Plastic Surgery	X	
Podiatry (feet)	X	X
Primary Care (PACT)	X	X
Prosthetics and sensory aids	X	
Pulmonary (lungs)	X	
Radiation oncology (cancer care)	X	
Radiology (x-rays and imaging)	X	
Recreation Therapy	X	X
Respiratory Therapy	X	
Rheumatology (joints, autoimmune diseases)	X	
Specialty Gynecology Services	X	
Speech-language pathology	X	
Spinal cord injury	X	
Telemedicine	X	
Traumatic brain injury and polytrauma	X	
Urology	X	

**Service:**

Vascular surgery (blood vessels)

**ALMC**

X

**KC**

Women's Health

X

X

## Long-term Care

VA community living centers serve Veterans who

- Have chronic stable conditions, including dementia
- Need rehabilitation or short-term specialized services, such as respite or intravenous therapy
- Need comfort and care at the end of life

The goals of care are to restore Veterans to maximum function, prevent further decline, maximize independence, and/or provide comfort when dying. Most VA community living centers are located on or near the grounds of VA medical centers throughout the United States.

For more information regarding eligibility for Long Term Care please contact your Primary Care Social Worker: Audie L Murphy Campus: 210-617-5113 / Kerrville Campus: 830-792-2581.

## Mental Health Services

### **Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255**

VA places a high priority on providing mental health services for Veterans of all eras of service.

VA provides specialty outpatient, residential, and inpatient mental health services at its medical centers and CBOCs. In addition, readjustment counseling services are available for Veterans and their families at Vet Centers across the nation. Our goal is to support recovery and enable Veterans facing mental health challenges to live meaningful lives in their communities and achieve their full potential.

VA mental health services are available in specialty clinics, primary care clinics, nursing homes, and residential care facilities where Veterans receive health care. Specialized programs, such as mental health intensive case management, work programs, and psychosocial rehabilitation services, are provided for those with serious mental health conditions.

VA has integrated mental health care into the primary care setting. Veterans may receive mental health care from their primary care providers or from a collaborating behavioral health provider based in the primary care clinic.

The list of services and programs that mental health supports includes

- Inpatient care
- Residential mental health rehabilitation treatment programs
- Outpatient mental health care
- Primary care-mental health integration
- Specialized PTSD treatment services
- Specialized substance-use disorder treatment
- Treatment for disorders related to military sexual trauma (these services are free for all Veterans who experienced military sexual trauma)
- Psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery services, including
- Psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery centers
- Peer support services
- Mental health intensive case management (MHICM)
- Suicide prevention programs
- Mental health programs for older Veterans
- Mental health programs for women Veterans
- Evidence-based psychotherapy programs
- Mental health disaster response/post-deployment activities

- Therapeutic and supported employment services

## Care Management, Chaplain, and Social Work Services

VA social workers are available in health care delivery settings and programs across the system of care. They provide psychosocial and clinical services to Veterans, their families, and caregivers. Care Management, Chaplain, and Social Work (CMCSW) programs address the whole health needs of wounded, injured and ill Servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers, with care and compassion throughout VHA. CMCSW has responsibility for the Caregiver Support Program, VA Chaplain Service, VA Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program, Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program, the VA Temporary Lodging Program, policies on reporting suspected abuse and neglect, and family support for Veterans with polytrauma. CMCSW is also responsible for the VA Liaisons for Healthcare at military treatment facilities, who provide comprehensive and specialized clinical assistance to transitioning Servicemembers at military hospitals. Also provided are clinical support and case management services to transitioning Servicemembers and new Veterans through the Transition and Care Management Program at each VA medical center. Go to [www.patientcare.va.gov/caremanagement.asp](http://www.patientcare.va.gov/caremanagement.asp) for more information.

The VA Chaplain Service ensures that Veterans and families have access to the highest quality of spiritual care, guarantees every patient's constitutional right to the free exercise of religion, and protects Veterans from undesired proselytization while in a VA medical facility. Go to [www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/](http://www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/) for more information.

Care Management: 210-161-8363

Chaplain Service:

Audie L Murphy Campus 210-363-5045 / Kerrville Campus: 830-792-2542

Social Work:

Audie L Murphy Campus 210-617-5113/ Kerrville Campus 830-792-2581

## Prosthetic Services

VA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. The term “prosthetic” includes artificial limbs and any devices that support or replace a body part or function. VA provides all clinically appropriate and commercially available, state-of-the-art prosthetic equipment, sensory aids, and devices to Veterans, crossing the full range of patient care. Such items include artificial limbs and bracing, wheeled mobility and seating systems, sensory-neural aids (e.g., hearing aids and eyeglasses), cognitive prosthetic devices, items specific to women’s health, surgical implants and devices surgically placed in the Veteran (e.g., artificial hips and pacemakers), home respiratory care, and recreational and sports equipment. In addition to providing devices, PSAS also administers three unique benefits to assist Veterans and Servicemembers with disabilities: clothing allowance, automobile adaptive equipment, and home improvement & structural alterations. For more information, visit [www.prosthetics.va.gov](http://www.prosthetics.va.gov).

## Caregiver Support Program

VA’s Caregiver Support Program provides services and support for family caregivers of Veterans including peer support, education, and training. VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) provides certain medical, travel, training, and financial benefits to caregivers of certain Veterans and Servicemembers who were seriously injured during service on or after September 11, 2001. Legislation passed in 2018 will expand eligibility for PCAFC for the next several years. For more information, contact the Caregiver Support Coordinator at your local VA medical facility, visit [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov), or dial toll-free, 1-855-260-3274.

## Women's Health

Women are enrolling for VA health care in record numbers and at VA we are committed to meeting their unique needs by delivering the highest quality care, in a safe and healing environment.

VA has implemented comprehensive primary care provided by trained and designated women's health providers at all sites of care. Comprehensive primary care means providing you with all your care needs, including general medical care and reproductive health care from the same provider, at the same place, and when possible at the same visit. VA primary care providers have been trained in women's health topics, state-of-the-art gender-specific equipment, such as mammography machines, (which have been purchased at many facilities nationwide), and a culture change initiative to make all VA staff more sensitive to the needs of women Veterans.

VA's comprehensive primary care services include care for acute and chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention, mental health and readjustment counseling, as well as gender-specific care such as cervical cancer screening (Pap tests), breast cancer screening (mammograms), birth control, and preconception counseling. VA also offers specialty care, including gynecology services. Maternity care and newborn care are also provided for eligible women Veterans (coordinated by VA, but usually provided off-site).

Care coordination is a way in which your health care team works together to make sure your health needs are met. Your Women's Health Patient Aligned Care Team (WH PACT) has training and expertise to care for women Veterans. The team will talk with you about your preferences and help you set goals for your health. The WH PACT will coordinate all aspects of your care. This coordination may include care provided by specialists, emergency room providers, inpatient hospitalizations, and referrals to non-VA care.



Every VA has a full-time Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) who can help you navigate the VA system. VA understands your needs and we are proud to serve you. Positive changes are underway across the entire system and employees are embracing the message: “It’s everyone’s job to care for women Veterans.” Learn more: [www.womenshealth.va.gov/culture\\_change.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/culture_change.asp)

As part of continuing culture change, VA is expanding efforts to address the issue of harassment and to promote a culture where all Veterans are respected. Harassment can be disruptive to access to care and have a negative impact on health and health care. Through action and accountability to eliminate any harassment at VA facilities, VA is making an impact to improve all Veterans’ experiences.

### **Additional Resources:**

#### **The Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC)**

WVCC staff are trained to provide women Veterans, their families, and caregivers information about VA services and resources. We are ready to respond to your concerns. The call is free, and you can call as often as you like, until you have the answers to your questions. The WVCC is available Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. ET, and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. ET at 1-855-VA WOMEN (1-855-829-6636).



Frequently asked questions:

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/programoverview/faqs.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/programoverview/faqs.asp)

Locate your nearest facility to get in touch with the WVPM:

[www.va.gov/directory](http://www.va.gov/directory)

Learn more about women Veterans health care:

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/)

Get more information about health care and enrollment:

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/healthcare.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/healthcare.asp)

## **VA Programs for Homeless Veterans**

VA's goal is that every Veteran has permanent, sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and other support services, and that Veteran homelessness in the future is prevented whenever possible (or is otherwise rare, brief, and nonrecurring). There are many programs and resources to support homeless Veterans.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs) is an example of one such program that provides a coordinated "medical home" tailored to homeless Veterans' needs. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an H-PACT that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff, and others who offer medical care, case management, housing assistance, and social services. The H-PACT provides and coordinates the health care that Veterans may need while helping them obtain and stay in permanent housing.

Talk with the Health Care for Homeless Veterans Coordinator or a representative from the H-PACT at your facility to learn more.

If you are a Veteran who has lost your home or is at risk of losing your home, you can receive the support you've earned to get back on your feet. Contact VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838) to talk confidentially to a trained VA staff person. The hotline and online chat ([www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless)) are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and

neither VA registration nor enrollment in VA health care is required to use either service. “Make the Call” and take the first step to access help from VA.

For more information about VA programs for homeless Veterans, go to:  
[www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless)



Suggested Video: (2 min 27 secs)

How to Help Homeless Veteran

## Whole Health System of Care

Traditionally, health care providers have focused on *what's the matter with patients*, zeroing in on their diseases and ailments. At VA, we are working to shift this focus by instead asking *what matters most* to Veterans.

The result is a *whole health approach*, a radical redesign of health care that empowers and equips you to take charge of your health and well-being. Guided by a personalized health plan, VA's Whole Health System considers the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental elements that work together to provide the best quality of life for you.

We want to start by getting to know you, putting you—rather than the disease—at the center of your health and your health care. This means your health team will get to know you as a person before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

In 2018, VA launched the full Whole Health System in one Flagship facility in each of the 18 Veterans Integrative Service Networks (VISNs). Flagship sites will expand Veteran self-empowerment, self-healing, and self-care by implementing three components: **The Pathway, Well-being Programs, and Whole Health Clinical Care.**

- **The Pathway** welcomes you into the Whole Health System. This component empowers you to explore your mission, aspiration, and purpose and to begin your overall personal health plan.
- **Well-being Programs** teach new skills to help you care for yourself. They also support your personal health plan with healthy living and complementary and integrative health (CIH) approaches such as mindfulness, yoga, tai chi, and health coaching.
- **Whole Health Clinical Care** is provided by clinicians who use a whole health approach grounded in a healing relationship. It incorporates CIH approaches and self-care and self-management strategies based on your personal health plan.
- **For more information:**

Whole Health Online Library Veteran-facing handouts

<http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE/veteran-materials/index.html>

### **Suggested videos for Veterans:**



Pathway to Whole Health (6 mins 32 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nkO3PA29c&feature=youtu.be>

An Overview of the Patient Centered Approach (6 mins)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Nf4yYogNe0&feature=youtu.be>

# Your Medicines

## How do VA pharmacists help Veterans?

Pharmacists are medication experts that work closely with your health care provider to ensure your medications are appropriate and working correctly. For more information on their specific duties, refer to VA's mobile application "Ask a Pharmacist"

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ask-a-pharmacist>

## What are pharmacists' responsibilities?

Pharmacists provide education about prescribed medications and ensure safe use for individual Veterans. The pharmacist will:

- Check for allergies
- Make sure new medicine can be taken with your other medications
  - Record medications you get from outside the VA, including over the counter items such as antacids, laxatives, herbals, and vitamins.
- Ensure medication dose is appropriate
- Make sure the prescription label has the correct directions on how to take the drug

- Look at medical information to make sure the drug is prescribed for the right reasons
- Verify the medication is on the VA National Formulary (VANF) or has received approval otherwise
- Contact the physician to double check any concerns
- Verify that the prescription is filled with the correct drug and strength.

## **What medications can I get from the VA?**

Veterans Affairs National Formulary (VANF) is a listing of products (e.g., drugs and drug related supplies) that must be available for prescription at all VA medical facilities and cannot be made non-formulary by a VISN or individual VA medical facility. If your current medication is not on the VANF, a medically similar alternative may be prescribed by the VHA provider if you do not meet requirements for dispensing a non-formulary medication. Under certain situations a drug that is not listed on the formulary may be prescribed. Your VHA provider would need to request this medication by completing a non-formulary request. Specialists review the request and determine approval. Both you and your provider are informed if this request for non-formulary medication is approved or denied.

### **VA National Formulary – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

[www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/nationalformulary/VANationalFormularyFrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf](http://www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/nationalformulary/VANationalFormularyFrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf)

### **VA National Formulary – Search Tool**

[www.pbm.va.gov/apps/VANationalFormulary/](http://www.pbm.va.gov/apps/VANationalFormulary/)

Note: Unlike Department of Defense (DoD), VA medications are listed by generic name (and VA drug class) because several brand names may exist or become available in the future for the same generic drug (i.e. ibuprofen instead of

Motrin). The use of the generic name as the standard for listing agents allows VISNs and facilities to carry the product with the best value for the generic agent. In some cases, the brand name drug is included in parentheses when it is important to use the brand product only, or as an example for complicated generic name combinations.

## **Can VA fill any prescription?**

Veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care System can obtain medications and medical supplies, prescribed by authorized providers in conjunction with VA medical care. VA health care providers are under no obligation to prescribe a medication recommended by a non-VA provider for dispensing by a VA pharmacy. By law, VA pharmacies cannot fill prescriptions that are written by a private physician with no connection to VA. In order to fill outside prescriptions at the VA, your primary care physician would need to rewrite the prescription.

Veterans can fill VA prescriptions at commercial pharmacies. In this situation, you are responsible for the full cost of the prescription; VHA is not responsible for the cost of prescriptions filled from non-VA pharmacies.

Don't forget to tell your VA provider or pharmacist about any medications you get filled at a pharmacy other than the VA, any other medicine (like antacids, laxatives, pain medicine), herbal supplements or vitamins you purchase on your own, or prescriptions from non-VA providers.

## **Pharmacy copayments**

VA pharmacies use a tiered copayment system to determine Veterans' costs for each medication.

### **Medication copayments apply to you if:**

1. You are a Veteran receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition and your annual income exceeds the applicable National Income Threshold (found at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits)). This threshold changes on an annual basis. For the current threshold amount, contact the Enrollment Coordinator at your nearest VA health care facility.
2. You are a Veteran with a service-connected condition rated less than 50 percent disabled but are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service-connected condition and your annual income exceeds the specified threshold.

Additional information such as exemptions from medication copayments is also available at:

[www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/resources/publications/IB10-971\\_medication\\_copayment\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/resources/publications/IB10-971_medication_copayment_brochure.pdf)

## How do I request refills of my prescriptions?

To prevent waste and reduce the risk that unneeded medications could fall into the wrong hands, **VA does not automatically refill medications**. In order to receive a medication refill authorized by your VA prescriber, you must actively request a refill using any one of the methods described below. To allow sufficient time for your refill to be processed and mailed to your home, it is critical that you request your refill at least 10 days before you will run out of your medication. You may request your refill well in advance of the date you will run out of your medication, but the VA will not begin to process it until 10 days before you are scheduled to run out.

There are several ways Veterans can request VA prescription refills:



- By phone
- By mail
- Online via My Health**e**Vet, Vets.gov, or Rx Refill mobile app

**By phone:** Most VA pharmacies have automated telephone refill lines. The phone number of your local VA pharmacy can be found on your prescription label. To order refills by phone, you will need the prescription number (shown as RX # on the prescription label) and your Social Security Number.

A list of VA medical facility telephone numbers can also be found at [www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1)

**By mail:** [VA pharmacy provides a refill request form](#) with each prescription filled. To refill by mail, please complete the request form and mail it to your VA pharmacy at the address listed on the form.

**Online:** You can use [My Health\*\*e\*\*Vet](#), [Vets.gov](#), or the [VA Rx Refill mobile application](#) to request prescription refills online. These tools require you to have a personal MyHealth**e**Vet advance or premium account. The VA Rx Refill mobile app requires a DS Logon.

An advantage of refilling your prescriptions online is that you can view your prescription history and track the delivery status of your package. Prescriptions that require special handling (such as refrigeration) are mailed from your local medical center and cannot be tracked on MyHealth**e**Vet at this time.

NOTE: Some of your prescriptions may not be refillable by VA pharmacy. Examples of prescriptions the pharmacy CANNOT refill are:

- Prescriptions from VA providers that you fill or obtain outside the VA,

- Some controlled substances such as certain pain medications, which cannot be refilled,
- Short term antibiotics

Contact your VA health care team if you have any questions/concerns or need more of your medications.

**Please do not wait until you are out or almost out of medicine to order your refills.**

Take your medications as your provider told you to. Keep your medication list up to date and share it with your health care team.

**If you would like to cancel a prescription you no longer use**, please contact your health care team. The VA medical center phone number is the same as the pharmacy phone number on your prescription label.

When a prescription no longer has refills and you need to remain on the medication, a renewal of the prescription is needed. You should contact your VHA provider as soon as possible to have a new prescription ordered. The best way to do this is to check the number of refills remaining in each medication before a visit with your provider. For more information, go to [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20180423-prescription-refill-options-for-veterans](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20180423-prescription-refill-options-for-veterans)

## **Delivery time for prescriptions from VA Mail Order Pharmacies**

Prescriptions are electronically ordered by VA providers and can be either picked up at the VHA pharmacy or mailed to your home. Generally, prescriptions that are mailed do not come from the local VHA pharmacy but rather from a

Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). Mailed prescriptions usually take an average of 60 hours from filling to delivery.

## **Additional information**

- Talk to a VA pharmacist
- Talk to your VA provider
- Log on to the Ask A Pharmacist VA Mobile App at <https://mobile.va.gov/app/ask-a-pharmacist>
- Log on to the Rx Refill VA Mobile App at <https://mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill>
- Log on to the My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet website at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
- Log on to the National Library of Medicine website at [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

# **RESOURCES FOR VETERANS TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR HEALTH CARE**

## **Office of Connected Care**

The Office of Connected Care extends health care access beyond the traditional office visit. Digital technologies—such as My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet (VA’s online health portal), virtual appointments, and mobile health apps—allow you to participate in your health care by giving you new ways to access your health data, and

connect with your care team when and where it is most convenient for you. The Office of Connected Care is made up of the following VA programs:

- **My HealtheVet** lets you refill prescriptions, message your care teams, schedule appointments, access your personal health record online, and more.
- **VA Telehealth Services** provides convenient access to virtual appointments and remote monitoring from your home or local community.
- **VA Mobile** develops mobile solutions, such as the VA App Store and mobile health apps, that offer secure, on-the-go access to your health data.
- **VHA Innovation Program** collects and implements new ideas from both VA employees in the field and from other health care experts, helping find new ways to give you the best care possible.

The Office of Connected Care helps you take charge of your health and collaborate with your care team like never before. Visit the Office of Connected Care's website for more information: <https://connectedcare.va.gov/>

Watch these videos to learn more about the Office of Connected Care and its programs:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6XRS8U3gJM&t0>
- <https://youtu.be/hrGOTI7p3go>
- <https://youtu.be/0KnWQ6R7yWM>

# My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is the award-winning Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) patient-facing website. It offers Veterans, service members, their dependents, and caregivers “anywhere, anytime” access to VA health care information and services.

My HealtheVet is a private and secure online personal health record. It’s free, easy to use, and helps you partner with your health care teams to take charge of your health and well-being.

## **1. START: Visit My HealtheVet** [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

My HealtheVet gives you tools to help track your health and build a Personal Health Record.

## **2. REGISTER: Get started with My HealtheVet**

Anyone can register on My HealtheVet, with different features available depending on your account type. With a Basic account, you can use health tracking tools, record information in your personal online journals and health history records, access medical libraries, take the HealtheLiving Assessment (to determine your Health Age), use mental health screening tools, and more.

If you are a VA patient, you can upgrade your account to Advanced or Premium. With an Advanced account, you can access all Basic account features, plus you can refill your VA prescriptions online 24/7.

Some features of My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet require a Premium account. With a Premium account, you will have full access to all the features available in My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet, including Secure Messaging and VA Online Scheduling (available at participating facilities). You will also have access to key portions of your VA medical record, such as VA Notes and VA Lab Results, as well as additional health information through the VA Blue Button.

### **3. AUTHENTICATE: Upgrade to a Premium My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet Account**

To get a Premium My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet account, you will need to go through a one-time authentication process. This security measure verifies your identity before allowing access to your VA health record.

Getting a Premium Account: If you're a VA patient, there are **two ways** you can upgrade your account:

- **In-Person Authentication (IPA)** at your local VA medical center or community-based outpatient clinic; or
- **Online Authentication** using your eBenefits/DoD Self-Service Logon (DS Logon) Premium account through [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov).

### **4. REFILL PRESCRIPTIONS: Manage your prescriptions and medications online**

Use My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet to keep your prescriptions straight. The My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet online prescription tools allow you to refill your VA prescriptions (Rx), track their delivery, get VA prescription shipment notifications, create medication lists, and more.

### **5. COMMUNICATE: Participate in Secure Messaging**

Use Secure Messaging to communicate online with your VA health care team. To use Secure Messaging, you must be a VA patient with a Premium account and receive care at a VA facility. Secure Messaging gives you quick, easy access to communicate about *non-urgent issues* with members of your VA health care team. You can do this anytime, anywhere, at your convenience.

### **Secure Messaging is only for non-urgent, non-critical communication!**

## **6. SHARE: Use VA Blue Button to view, print, and/or download your information**

The **VA Blue Button** tool gives you easy access to your VA medical records. It lets you view and download your My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet personal health information and share it with members of your health care team without the hassle of requesting paper records.

## **7. APPOINTMENTS: Self-schedule or request help scheduling certain VA appointments**

VA Online Scheduling is available for primary care, appointments, and may be available for specialty care appointments at certain facilities. To use Online Scheduling, you must have a My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet Premium Account, be a VA patient at a participating medical center or clinic and have had a primary care appointment at that facility in the last two years. Visit <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/keeping-up-with-all-your-va-appointments> or talk to your care team to learn more.

## **Resources**

- Go to the My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet home page, [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and

select **About** to access user guides, FAQs, and more to help you learn about My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet features.

- Access videos to help you learn more about My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet:  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3AQ\\_JVoBEyw4-GQg4Ch-UaL5m5yNNLhV](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3AQ_JVoBEyw4-GQg4Ch-UaL5m5yNNLhV).

## VA Telehealth Services

Through VA Telehealth Services, you can access VA care at a time and place that is most convenient for you.

Different Telehealth Services are available at different VA medical centers and clinics. For more information about what services are available near you, talk to your health care team or contact your VA medical center. You can find your nearest medical center by visiting:

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>.

VA uses several telehealth technologies to help you get the best possible care no matter where you are. Here are some examples:

**Real-Time Telehealth** lets you video conference with your VA care teams from any computer, smartphone, or other device with an internet connection from wherever is convenient for you—including your home. Available through VA's new VA Video Connect technology, Real-Time Telehealth helps save you the time, money, and hassle it would take to go to a medical center in person for routine visits, especially if you live far away.

**Store-and-Forward Telehealth and Home Telehealth** bring specialized care to you in your own home. This technology lets you share information with your care team and can help them monitor chronic conditions over time. It also



helps them capture and share images, sounds, or data with other specialists for help in diagnosis and delivery of care. This kind of VA Telehealth may be particularly useful if you have physical limitations that make travel to a medical center difficult.

**Telehealth Hubs** let you videoconference with a specialty provider while at your local clinic. This gives you greater access to VA specialty services, including mental health support.

To learn more about VA Telehealth Services, visit [www.telehealth.va.gov](http://www.telehealth.va.gov) or watch this Introduction to VA Telehealth Services:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5oe5pB7V2g>.

Watch this video about VA Video Connect for more information about how it is helpful for Veterans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HZPs-BFBtw>.

View this video to learn more about VA TeleMental Health services and the work that the Office of Connected Care does:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6XRS8U3gJM&t>.

## Reference

[www.telehealth.va.gov](http://www.telehealth.va.gov)

## VA Mobile

VA Mobile provides mobile health apps for Veterans to help them be more active participants in their health care and lead healthier lives.

Many of VA's apps are self-tracking, meaning they do not transmit data back to VA. These apps can help you manage chronic conditions or learn about and

manage symptoms of mental health issues. Other apps connect to VA systems. If you are a VA patient, you can use these apps to more easily access your health data or connect with your care team.

Most apps that connect to VA's health record are web apps, which means they can be accessed from any computer or mobile device with an internet connection. For your security, they store no information on your device. To access these apps, you need a DS Logon Premium (Level 2) Account. Learn more at <https://mobile.va.gov/login-information>

Visit the VA App Store to explore, learn about, and access the apps available for Veterans: <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/veterans>. Come back often to check out the latest apps!

Learn more about VA Mobile's work at [www.mobile.va.gov](http://www.mobile.va.gov) or watch the Connected Care 2017 video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6XRS8U3gJM&t>.

## Reference

<https://mobile.va.gov>

# Veteran's Health Library

Welcome!

The VHL offers Veterans, their family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, consistent, Veteran-focused health information.

The Library is a one-stop source for health information—all approved by VHA experts—to help Veterans stay well and well-informed. It includes topics specific

to Veterans, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related traumatic brain injury (TBI), and Agent Orange exposure.

The Library contains over 1,500 health sheets, over 150 videos, Go-to-Guides, and Flipbooks—in both English and Spanish—all available to Veterans, their family members, and the public. Veterans can access the Library anytime, no matter where they receive care.

Welcome to your Veterans Health Library. Come on in ...browse around...and see for yourself. Stay Healthy!

The Veterans Health Library can be accessed at [www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/) or through My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet at [www.myhealth.va.gov/](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/)



# **ADDITIONAL VA SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

## **Advance Directives**

As a VA patient, you have a say in the health care you receive. But what would happen if you were too ill to understand your treatment choices or to tell your doctor what treatment you want?

- Who would you want to make health care decisions for you?
- What type of treatments or procedures would you want?
- What treatments or procedures you would or **wouldn't** want?

Questions like these may be hard to think about, but they're important. That's why VA wants you to know about a legal form you can complete. It's called an "advance directive."

## What is an advance directive?

An advance directive is a legal form that helps your doctors and family members understand your wishes about medical and mental health care. It can help them decide about treatments if you are too ill to decide for yourself—for example, if you are unconscious or too weak to talk. *Your advance directive is used only when you aren't able to make decisions yourself.*

There are two types of advance directives: a **durable power of attorney for health care** and a **living will**.

## What is a durable power of attorney for health care?

This form lets you name the person you trust to make health care decisions for you if you can't make them yourself—your "health care agent." He or she will have the legal right to make health care decisions for you. You can choose any adult to be your agent. It's best to choose someone you trust, who knows you well and who knows your values. You should make sure the person is willing to serve as your agent. If you don't choose an agent, your doctor will choose

someone to make decisions for you as required in VA policy, in the following order: legal guardian (if you have one), spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or a close friend. Your health care team, or a court, will make decisions for you in accordance with VA policy if none of the above is available. Ask your care team for more details on this process.

## **What is a living will?**

A living will is a legal form that states what kinds of treatments you would or wouldn't want if you become ill and can't decide for yourself. It can help your health care agent and your doctor make decisions the way you want them to. Writing down what kind of treatment you would or wouldn't want can help make it easier for those who are asked to make decisions for you. If you don't have a living will, decisions will be made for you based on what is known about you in general and about your values. It is important to discuss your wishes with your loved ones, your doctors, and your health care team so they won't have to wonder what you want and if they are doing the right thing.

## **For more information**

Download VA Form 10-0137B, "What You Should Know About Advance Directives":

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-0137B.pdf>

# **The Patient Advocacy Program**

If you or a family member have a concern or problem related to your care at a VA facility, we want you to know there is a safe and supportive place where you can get help. Patient advocacy services are available for all Veterans and their

families who receive care at VA facilities and clinics. This program ensures that you and your family have someone to talk with about your concerns or issues.

We want you to get the best care possible to improve your health and well-being, and we want you to tell us about your experience—good or bad. If you have a compliment, suggestion, or concern regarding your care, first speak with your health care team. This team includes your provider, nurse, social worker, dietitian, pharmacist, chaplain, therapist, and other professionals who provide your medical care.

If you or a loved one believes your concerns are not being addressed by your care team, you may contact a VA Patient Advocate. A Patient Advocate is an employee whose job is to help resolve issues or concerns you may have about your health care. The Patient Advocate works on your behalf with management and other VA employees to help resolve your issues.

If you need help getting care or getting problems resolved, please contact the Patient Advocate.

### **Patient Advocate Offices**

**Audie L. Murphy Campus/Outpatient Clinics – 210-949-3822**

**Kerrville VA Medical Center – 830-792-2494**

**E-Mail: [www.iris.custhelp.va.gov](http://www.iris.custhelp.va.gov)**

# Ethics Consultation

## What is an ethics consultation?

Ethics consultation is a service provided by specially trained VA staff. When there is uncertainty or conflict about the right thing to do regarding the health care of a Veteran or their loved one, ethics consultants work with patients, families, and staff to help them make the right decisions to resolve these concerns.

Ethics consultants will not investigate complaints or allegations of misconduct. These are managed through the Patient Advocate Office.

## I'm just not sure... what is the right thing to do? Would an ethics consultation be helpful?

In health care, patients and families often face the difficult question of “what should be done?” The right choice for one patient may not be right for another. If you're unsure, or if you can't agree with your health care team or your loved ones about what's best, you can ask for an ethics consultation.

## When should I think about asking for an ethics consultation?

Here are some examples of why Veterans and families ask for, or the health care team might suggest, an ethics consultation:

- “I have to make a serious decision about a treatment that could affect how long I may live. After talking it over with my health care team, I am still not sure the team understands my point of view.”
- “My mother is too sick to make her own decisions. How do I decide what is best for her now?”

- “Our family is unsure and upset. We don’t agree about the right thing to do for our brother’s care. Is there a resource to help us work through this together?”

## **Who can request an ethics consultation?**

Anyone can ask for an ethics consultation.

## **What does an ethics consultation cost?**

Ethics consultations are free. You will not be billed for an ethics consultation.

## **How do I request an ethics consultation?**

To request an ethics consultation, contact the Ethics Consultation Service at your VA health care facility.

**The On-Call Ethics Team can be contacted through the hospital switchboard (210-617-5300) or the Integrated Ethics Program Officer at extension 15441 or 17970.**



## Frequently called Numbers or Extensions

### San Antonio

### Kerrville

Main Hospital Number	(210) 617-5300 (877) 469-5300	(830) 896-2020 (866) 487-1653
Telecare (Health Information 24 hours/day)	(210) 949-3994 Monday – Friday (Days)	Toll Free (888) 686-6350 Weekends, after hours & holidays
72 hour notification hotline (Non – VA emergent care)	844-724-7842	
Automated Medication Refill Program	(800) 209-7377	
Admissions	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 14895	(830) 792-2512
Agent Cashier	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15995	(830) 792-2550
Appointments/Scheduling	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15173	(830) 792-4444
Barber Shop	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 16704	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12149
Beneficiary Travel	(210) 617-5300 Ext 10281	(830) 792-2418
Billing/Insurance Information	(210) 616-8502	(830) 792-2435
Care Coordination	(210) 616-8363	
Chaplain	Ext 15441 or (210) 363-5045	(830) 792-2542
Community Care	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 13850	
COPAC/Central Scheduling	1 (877) 637-7348	
Decedent Affairs	(210) 949-3981 Option 3	
Dental	(210) 949-8900	(830) 792-2461
Disabled American Veterans	Ext 15189 or (210) 699-5064	(830) 792-2509
Eligibility	(210) 949-3981	(830) 792-2514

Fisher House “home away from home” for families and patients	(210) 617 – 5542	
Home Based Primary Care	(210) 616-8240	(830) 792-2645
GYN Clinic	(210) 617-5300 ext. 17092	<i>“only at Audie Murphy”</i>
Lab (Blood Draws)	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 16093	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12330
Medical Administration	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15137	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12113
Medication refills: VA Automated	1(800) 209-7377 (Opt 1 for refills; Opt 2 for questions)	
Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator	(210) 699-2147	
Palliative Care	(210) 203-9844 (pager)	(830) 792-2484
Paralyzed Veterans of America	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15275	
Patient Advocate	(210) 949-3822 (210) 617-5300 Ext 15214	(830) 792-2494
Pharmacy: Telemed	1(800) 209-7377 (Opt 1 for refills; Opt 2 for questions)	
Police	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15168	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12162 or 12210
Recreation Therapy	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 15125	<i>“only at Audie Murphy”</i>
Release of Information	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15610	(830) 792-2503
Respiratory Therapy	(210) 617-5300 Ext 14877	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12249
RESPIRE Care	(210) 616-8363	
Shuttle	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15251	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12418
Social Work	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15113	(830) 896 – 2020
Spinal Cord Injury Center	(210) 617-5300 16838	<i>“only at Audie Murphy”</i>
Suicide Prevention Coordinator	(210) 617-5300 ext. 15824	
Telehealth Service	(210) 617-5300 ext. 68256	

Texas Veterans Commission	Ext 15175 or (210) 699-5076	(830) 792-2553
Transition and Care Management (OEF/OIF/OND)	(210) 617-5300 ext. 19240	
Travel Office	(210) 617-5300 ext. 10281, 10282, 10283	
Traveling Veteran Coordinator	(210) 392-9207	
Veterans Crisis Line	1 (800) 273-8255 Press 1	
Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services	(210) 616-8202	
Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST)	(210) 949-8926	<i>"only at Audie Murphy"</i>
Voluntary Service	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15107	(830) 896-2020
Whole Health Program	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 15088	
Women Veterans Program	(210) 949-9449	

**Still have questions? We are happy to assist you.**

**Visit our home page at <https://www.southtexas.va.gov>**

**ALMC : Patient Education Coordinator: 210-617-5300 x 17090**

**KC: Patient Advocate: 830-792-2494**